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October 6, 2005

Chairman Boehlert
House Science Committee
202.226.6983 Fax

Dear Chairman Boehlert:

I write to commend you and the other co-sponsors of H.R. 3762 for your leadership on the issue of increasing fuel economy. Please share my views with your colleagues in the House as appropriate.

My organization, the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), has been a leader on raising the fuel economy of vehicles through our "What Would Jesus Drive?" educational campaign. We have encouraged consumers to choose the most fuel-efficient, least-polluting vehicle that truly meets their needs. We have also encouraged government officials to raise fuel economy standards to ensure that families have more fuel efficient vehicles to choose from.

Over 90 Christian leaders have endorsed the message of the "What Would Jesus Drive?" campaign. (See www.whatwouldjesusdrive.org for details.) We believe that fuel economy is a moral issue for two basic reasons: (1) the impact of global warming on the poor, and (2) our increasing dependence on foreign oil from unstable regions.

Katrina and Rita have reminded us that disasters like flooding hit the poor and forgotten the hardest. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projects that global warming could increase those impacted by flooding by 20-50 million, mostly in poor countries. Global warming could also significantly reduce agricultural output in many poorer countries in this century, resulting in an additional 80-90 million poor people at risk of hunger and malnutrition. These are just two examples of how the poor will be hurt. Because Jesus is our Lord, the evangelical community has worked in poor countries for many years and spent billions of dollars to help people meet their basic needs and to share the Good News about Jesus Christ. In the future global warming will be an insidious reversal of our long-standing efforts to help the poor.

Given that the U.S. is the world's number one global warming polluter, and that the transportation is the largest producer of global warming pollution, we feel that **increasing fuel economy is part of what it means to love our neighbor today.**

The other important issue is our dependence on oil from unstable regions. According to the Department of Energy, currently import 55% of our oil, and up to 75% of the world's oil reserves are in the Middle East. The National Defense Council Foundation in a report issued before the Iraq war estimates that oil imports cost our economy an additional \$300 billion a year in defense costs, loss of jobs, and loss of tax revenue -- the equivalent of adding over \$3 to a gallon of gas. Reducing our dependence on foreign oil increases our national and economic


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security, helping us avoid armed conflicts over scarce resources. It is in keeping with Jesus' teaching about peacemaking.

For these reasons, fuel economy should be raised as much as possible as quickly as possible in keeping with safety concerns. We are not unmindful of the economic realities facing domestic automakers, having met with Bill Ford and senior executives from GM in November 2002, and encourage appropriate consideration of helping them with rising health care costs.

While EEN does not endorse specific legislation, I do feel that you and your cosponsors of HR 3762 are offering important and needed leadership on the issue of fuel economy, and encourage you to do more, if possible. I will pray for your efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about our views. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Ball". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rev. Jim Ball, Ph.D.
Executive Director
202-554-1955

cc. Members of the House of Representatives